

*What's Cooking at the Zoo?*  
By Julie Miller

**MISSOURI ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Communication Arts  
Practice Test**

**Grade 4 – Nonfiction**

**Student's Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print first name and last name)

**Teacher's Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print first name and last name)

**School District** \_\_\_\_\_

**Building/Room** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do not open test booklet until instructed to do so.**

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Chef Freddy Cohen rolls shredded carrots, eggs, ground horse meat, and cod liver oil into bite-sized meatballs. He grabs a handful of squirming crickets, and the meal is complete. It's a delicious dinner—if you're an otter at Metrozoo in Miami, Florida.

Freddy Cohen is a zookeeper and head chef for over 400 animals at the zoo. He's up every day before the sun preparing meals for his feathered and furry customers. Like most great chefs, he is dedicated to creating special meals for special appetites.

What do you do with a pregnant orangutan who won't eat?

"I had to come up with something she liked," says Mr. Cohen, "otherwise we were afraid she would lose the baby."

The creative chef saved the day with his now-famous orangutan cake. He mixed together moistened monkey biscuits, oatmeal, apple, oranges, bananas, squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, and eggs. As the cake baked, a tempting aroma filled the kitchen. Asked if the orangutan liked the cake, Chef Cohen replied: "Not only did the animal eat it, but so did most of the zookeepers. They kept sneaking bites. Now,

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whenever I bake an orangutan cake, I have to bake two—one for the keepers, one for the animals.

Milkshakes are another Freddy Cohen specialty. “When we had the aardvarks, we made milkshakes for them out of dog food, milk, eggs, honey, and vitamins. Those were actually pretty tasty.”

Tasty?

“I’ve tried everything in this kitchen,” the chef boasts, “except for mice, crickets, and mealworms (squirmy maggot-like creatures fed live to small birds and hedgehogs).”

As zoo chef, Mr. Cohen has to be flexible. The diets are designed by the on-site veterinarian. Each diet is custom-made and subject to change depending on the nutritional needs of the animal. To combat dehydration in South Florida’s intense summer heat, several animals are given Gatorade to drink. If an animal is gaining weight, the amount of food might be decreased. If an animal is pregnant, her portion is usually increased, and she’s given extra vitamins.

Zoo food also provides a sneaky way for the keepers to give the animals medications and vitamins. They hide pills in

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peanut butter for the orangutans, and in meat for the carnivores. With the big cats, though, the keepers sometimes get outsmarted.

"We used to dip chunks of meat in a vitamin supplement," says Mr. Cohen, "but the cats would wash it off in their water bowl. Now we feed them ground horse meat. It's better to hide pills in. Even so, we have to alternate pieces of plain meat with pieces spiked with medicine. The cats are too smart."

Most zoo visitors do not understand how strictly the animal diets are controlled and why the public should never feed the animals. Freddy Cohen explains the many dangers associated with handouts from the public:

"Animals are like kids. They might fill up on junk food and then not have room for what's good for them. But what's worse is that zoo patrons can make an animal sick. A child with a cold sore in his mouth, for example, might throw an apple core to a chimpanzee. What people don't realize is that some human diseases can 'jump' species, and the animal may not have the immunities necessary to fight the infection. The virus that caused the cold sore can actually kill a chimp."

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Although the public isn't allowed to give the animals snacks, the zookeepers often provide healthy treats. Bear popsicles are a summertime favorite.

Half a dozen oranges are placed in a bucket of water, which is then frozen. The chunk of ice and fruit is delivered to the animals' area. The bears lick it, roll it around, and play with it until, finally, they can dig out the cool treats inside. Opossums get smaller popsicles: grapes frozen in ice cubes. The tortoise who stars in the Ecology Theater Show is rewarded with his favorite treat, a pink hibiscus blossom.

Much of the kitchen's yearly budget goes toward buying groceries. "Some of our animals are big eaters," says Chef Cohen. "An elephant will consume over twenty-one tons of hay, a ton of carrots, and a ton of elephant chow in a year. A tiger will average about one ton of meat per year."

Freddy Cohen thinks back on his thirty-three years as a zookeeper and chef. "When I first started, I was an animal handler. But after three years, I moved into the kitchen, and I've been there ever since. I like it," he says. "When I come to work, I never know what I'm going to find. Some days can be pretty chaotic. You might say it's like a zoo in here."

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1. Choose two of the animals from the story that need special food. Write the names of two animals in the chart and write what special food Chef Cohen made for each animal.

1. bear	1. popsicle
2.	2.
3.	3.

2. Do you think that Chef Cohen knows what he is talking about? Support your answer with information from the story.

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3. Write two questions that you would ask Chef Cohen about being a zoo chef if he came to your school.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Using information from the story, write about one of Chef Cohen's problems and explain how he solved it.

**Problem:**

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**Solution:**

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5.

Compare and contrast the diets of Chef Cohen's zoo animals with the diet of fourth-graders. Use two details or examples to explain how the diets of zoo animals are the same or not the same as the diet of fourth-graders.

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Circle the letter of the correct answer for Questions 5 and 6.

6. What is the author's purpose for writing this story?
- A. to inform the reader that zoos need special chefs
  - B. to persuade the reader to become a zoo chef
  - C. to inform the reader about animals in zoos
  - D. to persuade the reader to visit a zoo
7. When he talks about feeding the animals at the zoo, Chef Cohen says, "Some days can be pretty chaotic." What does "chaotic" mean?
- A. dull
  - B. disorganized
  - C. peaceful
  - D. hungry

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8. Now you will write a paper in response to a writing prompt. First, read the prompt in the box below.

You will now have 45 minutes for your prewriting activities such as brainstorming, listing, outlining, and writing a rough draft. Use the pages labeled “prewriting” to record your ideas and your rough draft.

You will then have another 45 minutes in which to write your final paper. Use the pages labeled “final paper” to record your completed work.

**Freddy Cohen seems to enjoy his job at Metrozoo.  
Write a story about a job that you would like to have  
some day, and explain why you would want it.**

**Prewriting**

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## Prewriting

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

## Prewriting

[illegible]

## Prewriting

[illegible]

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## Prewriting

[illegible]

## Final Paper

[illegible]

## Final Paper

[illegible]



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## Final Paper

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